CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for printing a code on an elongate article passing through a printing station, said article passing through said station in a longitudinal direction, said apparatus comprising:

an ink unit for storing ink to be delivered;

at least one printing head, said printing head being operatively connected to said ink unit, said printing head including at least two valves, said valves being laterally spaced from each other; and

a controller for controlling said ink unit and said at least one printing head, so that said controller is adapted to actuate said valves in order to print a code on said elongate article as said article passes through said printing station, said code being printed at least twice on said elongate article.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said valves are aligned.

3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said code includes ten bits.

4. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said each of said printing head includes three valves, so that said code is printed three times.

5. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said apparatus includes two printing heads, a second printing head being placed at a 90 degree angle for a first printing head.

6. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ink unit includes at least: an ink reservoir; a head draining valve; a pump; an air draining valve; an ink waste reservoir; and a main valve associated with each of said at least one printing head.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ink is a UV ink.

8. A redundant code printed on an elongate article, said code comprising a plurality of elongated bits separated by a predetermined distance, characterized in that said code is printed twice on said elongate article.

9. A code according to claim 8, wherein each of said codes are parallel to each other.

10. A code according to claim 8, wherein said code consists of ten bits.

11. A method for printing a redundant code on an elongate article as said elongate article passes through a printing station, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing an ink unit;

(b) providing at least one printing head, said printing head including at least two valves being laterally spaced from each other;

(c) providing a controller operatively associated with said ink unit and said at least one printing head; and

(d) actuating said valves with said controller in order to print said code.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein said at least two valves are aligned.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein said valves are actuated substantially simultaneously.